

## Cowan Thoughts on 2005 EWA Workshop

After reviewing the materials sent prior to the meeting, and attending the workshop in early December, I have four main observations by way of my personal comments.

- 1). The workshop format was a success, and provided the opportunity for significant discussion about the future of EWA with greater participation both from agency personnel and stakeholders. The discussion seemed to me to be honest and open, and was not constrained by an agenda that excluded stakeholder opinion. This is a dramatic improvement over previous such meetings where the agenda was too tightly controlled by the science advisors.
- 2). The role of the science advisors in promoting and enhancing the scientific foundation of EWA is still poorly defined, and appears in many ways to have become dysfunctional (even adversarial) between the advisors and some agency personnel. This is very worrisome and begs the need to reconsider the role of the advisors for the EWA Science Program. I also believe it to be dangerous to allow the science advisors to compete openly with others in the granting process, as this is a worst-case scenario with respect to conflict of interest. If the science advisors wish to continue to compete for funding in the PSA process, I recommend that they resign from their advisory role to the Science Program.
- 3). There has been little progress in advancing the scientific foundation of the EWA since it's inception, and recent events regarding the POD have put the program in jeopardy. It has become increasingly clear over the years that the EWA alone does not control sufficient water to have a large and measurable population level effect on fishery resources in the bay-delta ecosystem. However, the EWA was intended to be one piece of an integrated ecosystem-scale program to improve the capacity of the bay-delta system to provide ecosystem goods and services. I see no attempt to hold the remainder of the program(s) accountable, nor are they being subjected to the extreme level of scrutiny, as is the EWA. I believe that this level scrutiny has wasted time and money of those working on EWA, and has diverted attention from the failings of other programs intended to improve the ecosystem.

With this said, I would urge the scientific and management community (the MAS and PAS) to strongly defend the program for what it has accomplished, and not to allow the EWA to become the POD fall guy. I got a real sense at the workshop that some expected the EWA to ameliorate the POD problem, and it simply does not control enough water to do this, even if one were to believe that the POD problem was attributable mostly to exports. I personally don't believe the latter to be true. Rather I believe that the POD decline is symptomatic of a reduction in the bay-delta ecosystem's capacity to produce native fishery resources that is attributable to wide variety of chronic insults, not the least of which is the introduction of invasive species and land use practices.

4). In the coming year, I would recommend that most of EWA's actions should be directed at protection of adult delta smelt, even recognizing the risk of using water assets early in the season and losing flexibility for actions later in the year.